

absolutely guarantee the American people—but, more importantly, the head of the Border Patrol—I will have a statement from him early this afternoon, and he will say that if we implement the technology—which they gave us the detailed list of—he is confident we can have 90-percent effective control of our border and 100-percent situational awareness.

I hope my colleagues who are concerned about border security—and legitimately they are—will pay attention to the statement of the head of the Border Patrol who says unequivocally that if we adapt these specific enforcement capabilities and technology, we will be able to have control of our border. That is an important item in this debate and it is incredible detail.

Also in this legislation we need to give them the flexibility where there is the improved technology, et cetera. We do need more people to facilitate movement across our ports of entry, but we have 21,000 Border Patrol. Today, on the Arizona-Mexico border there are people sitting in vehicles in 120-degree heat. In 1986, we had 4,000 Border Patrol. We now have 21,000. What we need is the technology that has been developed in the intervening years.

I would be more than happy to say to my colleagues that if we have a provision that this strategy must be implemented and is providing 90-percent effective border control, that would serve as a trigger.

I hope my colleagues will reject the pending Vitter and Thune amendments and we will move on with the legislative process.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:43 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

BORDER SECURITY, ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND IMMIGRATION MODERNIZATION ACT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 3 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees for debate on the pending amendments.

The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor today to ask my colleagues to join us in supporting the historic comprehensive immigration bill that is before us today.

We worked hard on the Judiciary Committee to craft a strong bipartisan bill that bolsters our economy, secures our borders and promotes opportunity for both businesses and families.

I thank all of those involved in the original bill—Senators SCHUMER, MCCAIN, DURBIN, GRAHAM, MENENDEZ,

RUBIO, BENNET and FLAKE. I thank the members of the Judiciary Committee who all had a hand in changes to the bill. And I specifically want to thank Senator HATCH who worked with me on the I-Squared—Immigration Innovation—bill. The bill on the floor today contains many of the provisions from I-Squared that encourage more American innovation.

As you know, we passed this comprehensive immigration bill out of committee on a bipartisan vote of 13 to 5 and I am hopeful we can build that same kind of broad-based support on the Senate floor.

This is not going to be simple. It is not going to be easy. But the most important thing—the reason I am optimistic we can get something done—is the fact that we are all coming at this from the same basic starting point:

Democrats and Republicans, Senators from border States and Senators from inland States, we can all agree on this: Our current immigration system is broken. And changes must be made.

The question now is how those changes should come about, and that is why we are having this debate—to find that common ground and pass a bill that is ultimately stronger because it reflects the needs and priorities of both parties and all regions of the country.

Passing comprehensive immigration reform will be a vital step forward for our country. It will be vital to our immigrant communities, who have been separated their families for too long. It will be vital to our security. And it will be vital to our economy, to strengthening our workforce, addressing our long-term fiscal challenges and promoting innovation.

There are many strong and compelling arguments for immigration reform, but let me begin with the economic impact on our businesses and major industries.

Minnesota is a big agriculture State, just like the State of Wisconsin, Madam President, and I can't tell you how many farmers and agricultural businesses I have heard from who tell me they rely on migrant workers and other immigrants to keep their operations going. I have heard it from high-tech startups, too, as well as big technology companies like 3M, St. Jude and Medtronic. I have heard it from the homebuilders and the construction companies, even hospitals and health care providers.

These businesses represent a vast range of industries and interests. But when it comes to immigration reform, they all agree: It is critical to their operations, and it is a vital engine for growth and innovation.

In fact, history shows that immigrants have helped America lead the world in innovation and entrepreneurship for generations:

More than 30 percent of U.S. Nobel Laureates were born in other countries. Ninety of the Fortune 500 companies were started by immigrants, and 200 were started by immigrants or their

children, including 3M, Medtronic, and Hormel in Minnesota.

Workers, inventors, scientists and researchers from around the world have built America. And in an increasingly global economy, they are a big part of keeping our country competitive today.

If we want to continue to be a country that thinks, invents and exports to the world, then we can not afford to shut out the world's talent. It doesn't make sense to educate tomorrow's inventors and then send them back home, so they can start the next Google in India or France.

That's why I introduced the I-Squared Act with Senator HATCH to make much needed reforms to allow our companies to bring in the engineers and scientists they need to compete on the world stage.

One of the things that bill would do is increase fees on employment-based green cards, so that we can also reinvest in or own homegrown innovation pipeline by funding more science, technology, engineering and math initiatives in our schools.

In my State the unemployment rate is at 5.4 percent. We actually have job openings for engineers, we have job openings for welders, and we want those jobs to be filled from kids who go to the University of Minnesota. We want those jobs filled by kids who get a degree at a tech school in Minnesota. But right now we have openings and we have to do a combination of things. We have to be educating our own kids and making sure if there is a doctor coming from another country who is willing to study at the University of Minnesota or in Rochester, MN, and then wants to do his or her residency right in America in an underserved area in a place such as inner-city Minneapolis or a place such as Deep River Falls, MN, we let them do that residency or internship there instead of sending them packing to their own country.

Much of the legislation that was in the I-Squared bill, as I mentioned, is included right here in the bill we are considering. The health care leaders' provision I mentioned originally, called the Conrad 30 bill, something I worked on with Senator HERTKAMP and Senator MORAN and others—that is also in this bill.

Here's something else that's just good sense: Bringing the roughly 11 million undocumented workers out of the shadows.

Immigrants who are “off the grid” can not demand fair pay or benefits, and there are those who seek to take advantage of that. It's a bad thing for the American workers whose wages are undercut. And it's a bad thing for the American families whose undocumented relatives are being exploited.

In addition to the economic implications, having millions of undocumented people living in our country poses a serious threat to both our national security and public safety.

This bill takes the only rational and feasible approach to bringing these